

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000680

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAN, WHA/PDA
WHITE HOUSE PASS NSC/WEUROPE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ

IRAQ

11. "Victory? Not yet"

The conservative National Post opined (3/11): "...The truth is that nothing has yet been 'won' in Iraq - notwithstanding the wishful thinking we hear from Mr. Chretien, French President Jacques Chirac and the other world leaders whose desperation to avoid war is blurring into appeasement. The battle will not be won until Iraq is fully disarmed - a goal that, more and more, would seem to require the removal of Saddam Hussein to be achieved."

12. "Saddam has to go, but we can't trust Bush to do it"

Retired political reporter and columnist Anthony Westell observed in the leading Globe and Mail (3/11): "... I'm in favour of using force if necessary to remove Mr. Hussein. But, and here's the rub, the man who has the force is Mr. Bush, and he, too, I fear, is showing signs of megalomania. He loves being a president at war. See him strut, hear his bellicose speeches to his troops. And remember that Iraq is only the first part of his grand strategy. He plans to reorganize the Middle East - and, it appears, any other part of the world that offends him.... [But] how can I reconcile these two views - that we should remove Saddam Hussein, by force if necessary, but that Mr. Bush is not the man we can trust with the task? My answer is probably idealistic. Unless Mr. Hussein proves he has disarmed and steps down, I think the Security Council should vote to remove him and replace his regime with a temporary UN administration, using force if necessary, but a measured force, applied by troops in blue helmets and under UN command. If Mr. Bush agreed to commit U.S. forces under those conditions, good. But I know that's highly unlikely, and there would be no way now to stop him from acting alone. In that case, the lesson for the Security Council should be that it is time, past time, to create a multinational military force able to enforce its rulings."

13. "Saddam doesn't have a prayer"

Under the sub-heading, "The Iraqi dictator's greatest miscalculation was to toy with the Bush administration after Sept. 11. Now there's no turning back," columnist Drew Fagan suggested in the leading Globe and Mail (3/11) that, "...It may be that the Bush administration gambled from the start - using disarmament as a smokescreen for regime change, using the UN to give credibility to a fundamentally unilateral policy. If so, the pretext is falling away. But Mr. Hussein's calculations have been infinitely more reckless. He has brought on himself what appears to be the imminent destruction of his government and the occupation of his country. Mr. Hussein won't have to live with the aftermath. The rest of the world does. They should hope that the war that now appears all but certain goes as well as the Americans have planned. This is one Hail Mary pass that, if thrown, must be completed successfully."

14. "Tide turns against Bush"

Columnist Thomas Walkom wrote in the liberal Toronto Star (3/11): "The Iraq crisis is no longer about stopping Iraq. It is about stopping the United States.... Most countries outside the U.S. are no longer worried about rogue Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. They are worried about rogue American President George W. Bush.... For now it is not Iraq, a minor Middle Eastern power, that is in potential defiance of the U.N. system, but the mighty U.S. In effect, Bush has served notice that the painstaking logic of collective security, which the U.S. itself did so much to create 58 years ago, is to be junked. War is to be no longer a last resort but an active part of superpower foreign policy. Decisions on the international order are to be made not at the U.N. but in Washington alone. The sovereignty of other nations is now to be wholly contingent upon U.S. geopolitical interests. No wonder the rest of the world is nervous. No wonder that France, Germany,

Russia and (maybe) China have forged their unlikely peace coalition."

15. "Test Iraq's will to fully disarm"
The liberal Toronto Star editorialized (3/11):
"...Obsessed with toppling Saddam, Bush has trotted out one dubious rationale after the other for war: To destroy weapons the U.N. isn't sure Saddam possesses. To guard against the possibility he might give weapons to Al Qaeda, when no Baghdad-9/11 axis exists. To punish Saddam for befriending other terrorists. To defend the U.N.'s honour. To liberate Iraqis from a despot. To defend Israel. To safeguard oil. To democratize the Mideast. Because 250,000 U.S. troops can't be kept waiting forever. And now to spare Bush an embarrassing climbdown. This dizzy reasoning has sown discord at the U.N., in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and in the European Union. Bush's threat to ignore the U.N. has led to criticism that he is acting like a scofflaw himself.... The U.N. can legitimately demand that Baghdad 'disarm' or face attack, as the U.S. wants. But not without defining what that implies. And not without giving the Iraqis a chance to comply."

16. "An untutored, unprepared president will be running this war"
Former Washington correspondent and professor of journalism and international affairs at Carleton University, Andrew Cohen pointed out in the nationalist Ottawa Citizen (3/11) that, "...[President Bush] hasn't seen war, as JFK or Truman did, or pondered the future, as Lincoln did, which would make him more credible. Why won't he disavow the interests of oil? Does he challenge the hawks? Does he demand more information? His lack of perception and curiosity make even those who support intervention wish this were Al Gore's War. He sees Iraq as a question of security, pure and simple, and security is a president's greatest responsibility. The dangers - the damage to the United Nations, the alienation of old allies, the challenge of Iraq after Saddam - are of less consequence. In these matters, he is innocent of nuance. Without great experience or knowledge, Mr. Bush does have faith. He reads short inspirational homilies. Religion allows him to see things in black and white - evil or America, peace or chaos - which may be the only way to see Saddam Hussein. As he makes the most important decision a president can, he is said to be keeping his own counsel. In the end he may well do the right thing for the wrong reasons in Iraq, and it may make him courageous, resolute and wise. One hopes so. In the meantime, Mr. Bush on the brink is simply frightening."

CELLUCCI